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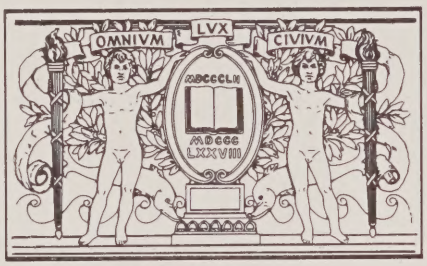

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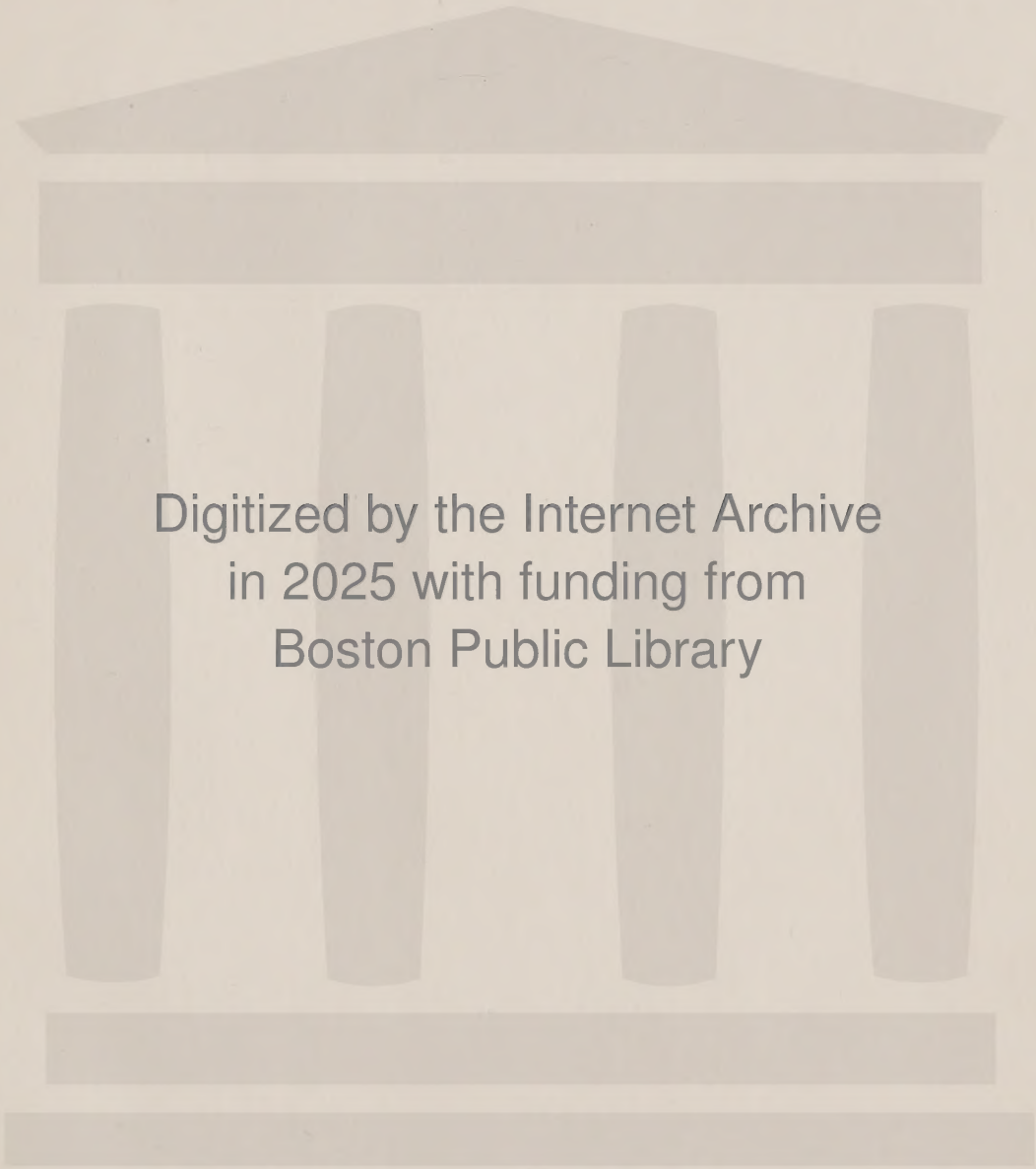
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SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT AGENCY HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY, 1984/1985, WITH COMPARISONS WITH THE 1974 BRA/BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT SURVEY

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November 1985

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R/11/85

Background Note:

The 1984/1985 Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency Survey of Housing Conditions

From August 1984 through January 1985, the Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency conducted a survey of housing in all the neighborhoods of the city. The survey was performed by a staff of rehabilitation specialists. This survey was designed to determine the number of residential and nonresidential structures, the vacant lots in the city, and to classify the exterior condition of the buildings in five categories:

A. Building appears in very good condition and does not need any work.
B. Building appears in good condition; needs a paint job or a roof job.
C. Building appears in fair condition; needs several repairs of a major or minor nature--roof, gutters, porches, painting--but not necessarily all.
D. Building appears in poor condition; needs many major and minor repairs and possibly a total rehabilitation.
E. Building appears in very poor condition, appears structurally unsound, has very many major and minor repair needs, and does not appear economically feasible to rehabilitate.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority provided some technical assistance for the 1984/1985 survey.

The 1974 Housing Inspection Department/BRA Housing Condition Survey

The 1974 housing condition survey was performed by rehabilitation specialists from the Housing Inspection Department. They examined all residential areas outside of urban renewal areas and conducted exterior inspection of one-third of this stock. An explanatory note described the survey criteria as follows:

"The varied physical condition of any city's housing stock is difficult to measure because there are no commonly accepted definitions of qualitative levels. The inadequacies of census indicators of quality have been well documented. In response to this measurement problem, qualitative levels have been operationalized for the purpose of this study by means of an index of varying amounts of resources levels has been sectioned, somewhat arbitrarily, to correspond with five common descriptions of upgrading strategies.

"The first category, "A", includes all units which are presently in good condition or for which a minimal amount of work, not exceeding $500, is necessary. The second category, "B", includes all units for which a modest amount of repair, not exceeding $1,000, would be sufficient. Category "C" includes all units which are best suited for treatment under federally-assisted code enforcement (FACE) programs. Units within this category might require the replacement of a major system--electrical, plumbing, or heating, requiring $1,000 to $3,000 worth of fix-up. Category "D" refers to those units for which gut rehabilitation, with a cost ranging from $3,000 to $10,000, is the only solution. Finally, category "E" includes those units which do not merit fix-up at all, and which should be demolished."

The results of the housing condition survey done in 1984/85 by the NDEA can be compared with earlier housing condition reports and surveys. A comparison with the housing survey done in 1976 by the BRA (see Boston Redevelopment Authority, Housing in Boston: Background Analysis and Program Directions, June, 1979) highlights changes over a ten-year period.

Findings:

The 1984 Survey

The 1984 survey shows that the city's average of units in C+D+E condition is 8 percent and the units in A+B condition are 92 percent. But the housing conditions vary widely among the neighborhoods. See Table 1.

South End, Fenway/Kenmore, West Roxbury, Roslindale, Allston/Brighton, Back Bay/Beacon Hill and Central have housing stock with between 2 percent and 5 percent in C+D+E condition.

South End, Fenway/Kenmore, South Boston, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain and Hyde Park have housing stock with between 5 percent and 9 percent in C+D+E condition.

Charlestown has housing stock of 11 percent in C+D+E condition.

Only East Boston, Roxbury and Mattapan have housing stock between 18 and 33 percent in C+D+E condition.

The 1974 Survey

A comparison with the 1974 survey shows a declining percentage of units in C+D+E relative to the survey of 1984. The change in share of dwelling units in C+D+E housing condition, between 1974 and 1984 was as follows:

- South End, Fenway/Kenmore, Roxbury (37 percent), Charlestown (31 percent), South Boston (30 percent), East Boston (23 percent), Central (23 percent), Dorchester (22 percent), Jamaica Plain (21 percent);
- Back Bay/Beacon Hill (18 percent), Allston/Brighton (15 percent);
- Mattapan (10 percent), Hyde Park (5 percent), Roslindale (4 percent), West Roxbury (0 percent);

See Tables 2 and 3 and Chart 1.

Table 1

HOUSING SURVEY 1984/1985

Neighborhood	Condition					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
East Boston	5,798	4,759	1,577	764	748	13,646
	42.5%	34.9%	11.6%	5.6%	5.5%	100%
Charlestown	2,045	1,567	340	73	36	4,061
	50.4%	38.6%	8.4%	1.8%	0.9%	100%
Central	1,866	2,030	159	23	8	4,086
	45.7%	49.7%	3.9%	0.6%	0.2%	100%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	6,975	5,288	374	119	10	12,766
	54.6%	41.42%	2.9%	0.9%	0.007%	100%
South End/	10,331	32,240	999	717	25	44,312
Fenway/Kenmore	23.3%	72.75%	2.25%	1.6%	0.06%	100%
Allston/Brighton	7,693	12,002	536	70	8	20,309
	37.9%	59%	2.63%	0.35%	0.04%	100%
South Boston	6,337	6,567	1,117	188	56	14,265
	44.4%	46%	7.83%	1.3%	0.4%	100%
Roxbury	3,131	17,237	2,189	1,696	86	24,339
	12.9%	70.8%	9%	6.7%	0.35%	100%
West Roxbury	4,731	961	106	10	1	5,809
	81.5%	16.5%	1.82%	0.17%	0.02%	100%
Jamaica Plain	6,338	16,432	1,432	255	89	24,537
(including Mission Hill)	25.5%	67%	5.8%	1%	0.3%	100%
Dorchester	22,559	23,610	3,502	480	166	50,417
(North and South)	44.75%	46.8%	6.95%	0.95%	0.53%	100%
Roslindale	7,688	8,110	427	71	0	16,296
	47.2%	49.8%	2.6%	0.44%	0	100%
Hyde Park	3,217	4,391	407	71	0	8,086
	39.8%	54.3%	5%	0.9%	0	100%
Mattapan	2,931	6,946	1,441	579	140	12,037
(including Franklin Field)	29.3%	57.7%	12%	4.8%	1.16%	100%
City Total	91,640	142,140	14,573	5,116	1,973	254,942
	36%	56%	5.4%	2%	0.6%	100%

Table 2

HOUSING CONDITION IN BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS IN 1974 AND 1984

Neighborhood	Year	Condition	
		A & B	C & D & E
East Boston	1974	54%	46%
	1984	77%	23%
Charlestown	1974	58%	42%
	1984	89%	11%
Central	1974	72%	28%
	1984	95%	5%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	1974	78%	22%
	1984	96%	4%
South End--Fenway/Kenmore	1974	59%	41%
	1984	96%	4%
Allston/Brighton	1974	82%	18%
	1984	97%	3%
South Boston	1974	60%	40%
	1984	90%	10%
Roxbury	1974	47%	53%
	1984	84%	16%
West Roxbury	1974	98%	2%
	1984	98%	2%
Jamaica Plain	1974	72%	28%
	1984	93%	7%
North & South Dorchester	1974	69%	31%
	1984	91%	9%
Roslindale	1974	93%	7%
	1984	97%	3%
Hyde Park	1974	89%	11%
	1984	94%	6%
Mattapan	1974	72%	28%
	1984	82%	18%
City Total	1974	70%	30%
	1984	92%	8%

Table 3

BRA/BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY, 1974*

Neighborhood	Planning District	Condition					Total
		A	B	C	D	E	
East Boston	1	2,276	4,996	5,358	797	148	13,575
		17%	37%	39%	6%	1%	100%
Charlestown	2	1,486	1,536	2,146	94	12	5,371
		28%	30%	40%	2%	-	100%
Central	4,6	3,568	2,408	1,502	828	9	8,351
		43%	29%	18%	10%	-	100%
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	5	6,973	6,408	3,379	410	13	17,178
		41%	37%	20%	2%	-	100%
South End	6	1,846	3,165	4,892	731	137	10,771
		17%	29%	45%	7%	1%	100%
Fenway/Kenmore	7	4,113	5,368	3,728	559	58	13,826
		30%	39%	27%	4%	-	100%
Allston/Brighton	8	10,491	10,353	4,256	219	-	25,319
		41%	41%	17%	1%	-	100%
South Boston	3	3,012	5,951	4,434	1,086	256	14,739
		21%	39%	31%	8%	2%	100%
Roxbury	10	4,041	7,908	7,626	4,653	984	25,202
		16%	31%	30%	13%	4%	100%
West Roxbury	13	7,724	3,049	249	-	-	11,033
		70%	28%	2%	-	-	100%
Jamaica Plain	9	5,377	6,371	3,858	444	177	16,227
		33%	39%	24%	3%	1%	100%
North Dorchester	11	2,217	4,879	3,133	211	30	10,470
		21%	47%	30%	2%	-	100%
South Dorchester	11	4,579	12,010	5,951	461	139	23,140
		20%	52%	26%	2%	1%	100%

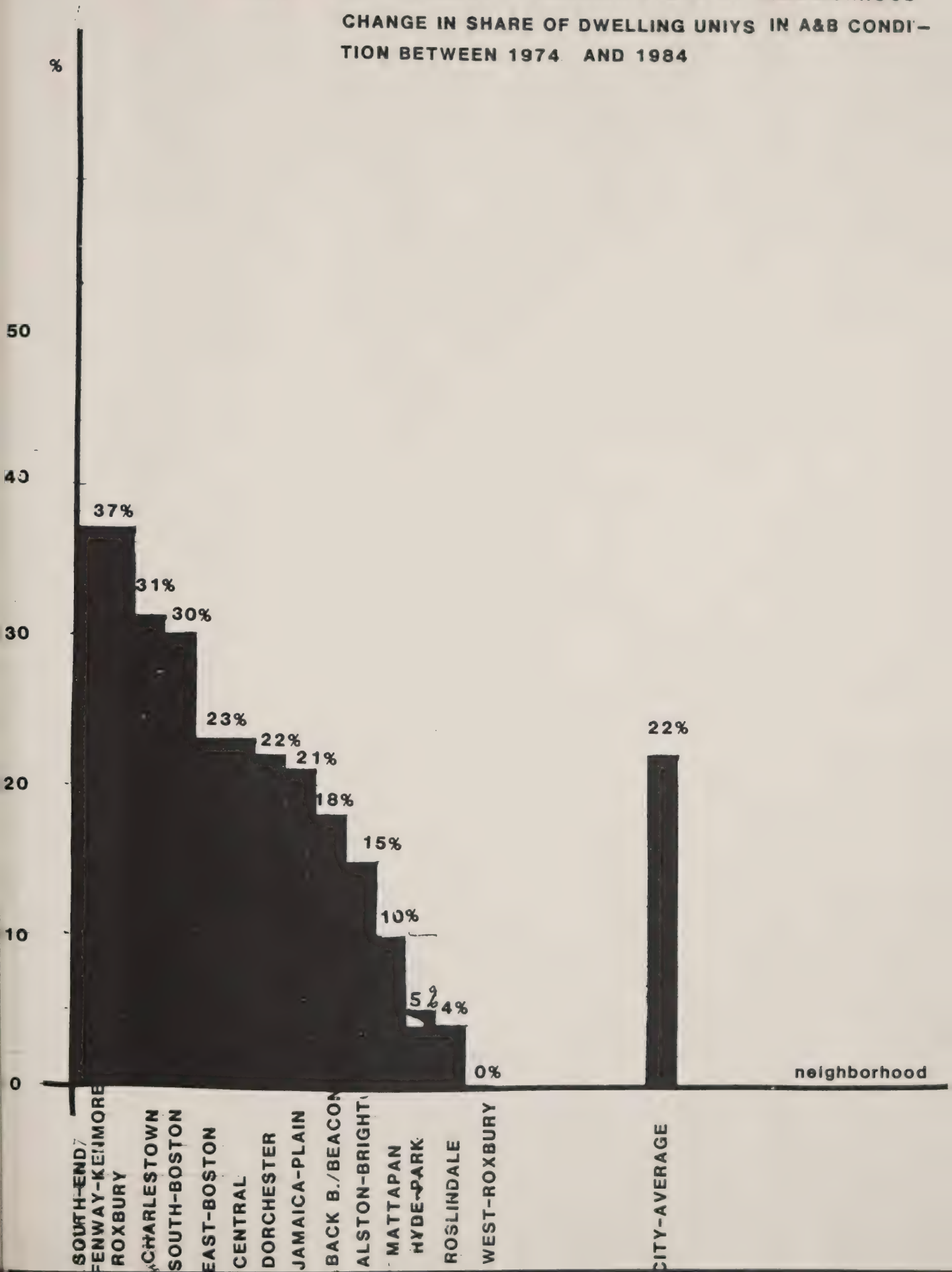
Roslindale	12,15	5,827	5,280	819	77	2	12,005
		49%	44%	7%	1%	-	100%
Hyde Park	14	5,384	4,152	949	225	28	10,738
		50%	39%	9%	2%	-	100%
Mattapan	15	3,240	7,442	3,001	1,030	234	14,947
		22%	50%	20%	7%	2%	100%
City Total		A + B = 70%		C + D + E = 30%			232,856

* Boston Redevelopment Authority, Housing in Boston: Background Analysis and Program Directions, June 1974.

Table 4

VACANT LOTS, THE 1984 HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY

Neighborhood	Vacant Lot
East Boston	368
Charlestown	99
Central	27
Back Bay/Beacon Hill	38
South End	724
Fenway/Kenmore	112
Allston/Brighton	21
South Boston	588
Roxbury	1,698
West Roxbury	165
Jamaica Plain	1,098
North Dorchester	834
South Dorchester	890
Roslindale	108
Hyde Park	223
Mattapan	154
Total Vacant Lots	7,147

CHART 1 : IMPROVEMENT OF HOUSING STOCK BY NEIGHBORHOOD

CHANGE IN SHARE OF DWELLING UNIYS IN A&B CONDI-
TION BETWEEN 1974 AND 1984